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UNIDO, gender equality and the empowerment of women

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Report by the Director General

At its seventeenth session, the General Conference inter alia called for gender mainstreaming to be scaled up and efforts to be strengthened to achieve gender parity in the staffing of the Organization (resolution GC.17/Res.3). This report therefore provides information as follows: Part 1 outlines the findings of the participatory midterm review of the UNIDO Policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UNIDO/DGB(M).110/Rev.2 of 27 November 2015) and the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Strategy, 2016-2019 (document GC.16/8). Part 2 contains a summary of the UNIDO gender parity action plan, which is informed by the gender policy and strategy and the recommendations from the review undertaken in 2018.

I. Key findings of the midterm review

1. Through consultations with UNIDO staff, Member States and other United Nations agencies, the midterm review of the UNIDO Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW) assessed its implementation by the Organization. The review focused on three main areas: (I) relevance of the policy and strategy; (ii) effectiveness of their implementation; and (iii) recommendations to strengthen their delivery.

Areas of progress

2. UNIDO has completed or is on track to meet 95 of the 120 actions committed to in the policy and strategy. Since the start of their implementation period, the Organization has progressed most strongly in (I) increasing the quality of gender-responsive design in programmes/projects; (ii) strengthening institutional arrangements for advancing GEEW throughout the Organization's programmatic and organizational structure; and (iii) resource-tracking of gender-responsive projects

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through the gender marker system. The areas of least progress were (1) mainstreaming of gender-related responsibilities and ensuring accountability across the Organization, with the burden of expectation remaining primarily on the resource-constrained Gender Office; (ii) achieving gender parity, in particular at senior levels; and (iii) use of organizational units' annual gender plans as tools for facilitating implementation of commitments and identifying responsibilities and needs.

Supporting factors

3. Several internal and external factors supported the progress achieved. A robust organizational policy and strategy aligned with United Nations system-wide requirements on GEEW provided a clear framework of guidance and accountability. This was facilitated by a strong and visible leadership from the Director General, and supported by senior managers. Implementation was driven by the Gender Coordinator with the support of dedicated experts, interns and the rotational Gender Officer, as well as the gender focal point network and a core group of extremely committed staff members. Financial resources to support implementation were a key determining factor, with one Member State, Finland, providing extrabudgetary support to strengthen implementation of the strategy.

4. External factors included support by Member States and donors to advance gender equality in industrialization. Their requirements for strengthened gender mainstreaming within their funded projects and across the Secretariat have brought increased momentum and accountability for such actions. The adoption of the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity (2017) similarly increased momentum toward achieving gender parity. Lastly, UN Women's leadership in implementing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) framework and the international community's commitment to GEEW in the 2030 Agenda and its Goal 5 helped advance GEEW throughout the Organization.

Recommendations

5. The findings led to a number of recommendations to strengthen delivery of the policy and strategy by 31 December 2019, and for the development of the next UNIDO Strategy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women:

(a) **Strengthened responsibilities for gender mainstreaming**: "Business owners" should be identified for each priority area of the policy, strategy and the UN-SWAP, and specified in the new strategy. Responsibilities should be allocated to respective departments who will report on those factors. The Gender Office should retain clear boundaries around the limits of its coordinating/coaching/monitoring function. All staff should set at least one work and learning objective on gender in their annual performance plans;

(b) **Build staff and leadership capacity to respond to commitments**: All staff should complete the "I Know Gender" training as a mandatory requirement. A tailored executive leadership for gender equality programme should be rolled out as a priority. Departments and divisions should engage more robustly with their annual gender equality work plans.

(c) **Build capacity for and strengthen the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data**: These data will strengthen monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and enhance reporting on organizational and programmatic results on gender, including assessing UNIDO's contribution to achieving the SDGs;

(d) **Development of a robust communications strategy**: This will help communicate achievements made by the Organization and its donors both internally among staff and externally to partners and Member States, clarifying the links between UNIDO's mandate and gender equality, and strengthening organizational commitments to GEEW. Moving forward, this should enable stronger gender

transformative programming as aligned with UN-SWAP 2.0, and gender parity as aligned with the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity;

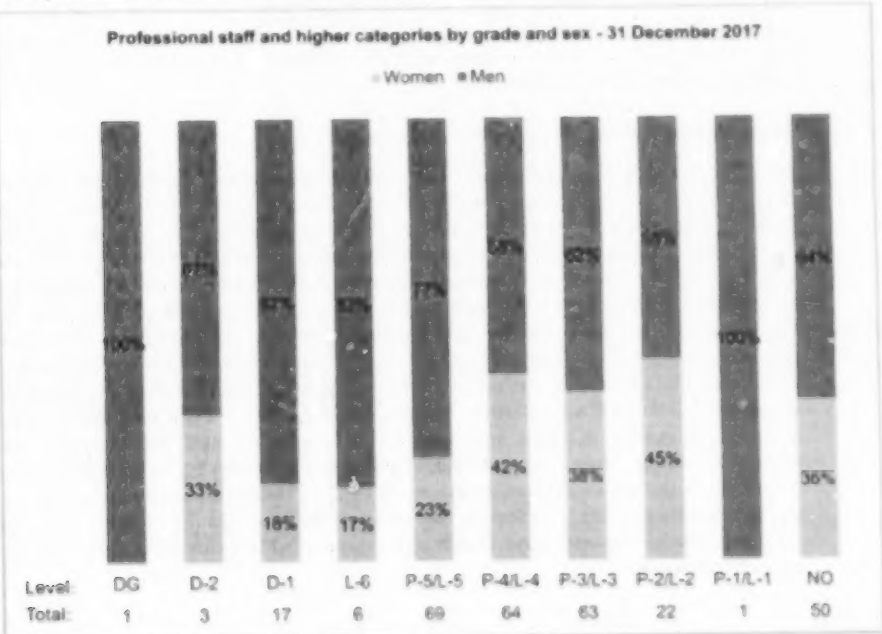
(e) **Development of a gender parity action plan**: Gender under-representation in specific staff categories should be addressed through targeted modifications to recruitment policies and procedures. Internally, further promotion of an enabling work environment, including career development, elimination of bias and flexible work arrangement policies, will foster a productive and inclusive workplace.

II. UNIDO gender parity action plan, 2018-2023

6. The findings of the midterm review informed the development of an action plan in line with recommendation (e) above, to achieve gender parity throughout the Organization. The gender policy affirms UNIDO's commitment to gender parity, defining it as equal numbers of men and women at all levels of an institution or organization, particularly at senior and decision-making levels. The gender strategy highlights gender parity as one of three organizational gender priority areas and calls for intensive efforts to develop new initiatives increasing the participation and representation of women, specifically at professional levels. Member States have also called for gender parity, most recently in resolution GC.17/Res.3, which requested the Director General to strengthen efforts to achieve gender parity by drawing on best practices and lessons learned as described in the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. The System-wide Strategy commits to gender parity in the United Nations system, setting the target of achieving this at senior levels of leadership by 2021, and across the board by 2026. For those entities such as UNIDO, facing a steeper slope of change, the end goal is set at 2028. Meaningful inclusion of women in decision-making increases effectiveness and productivity, and brings new perspectives and solutions.

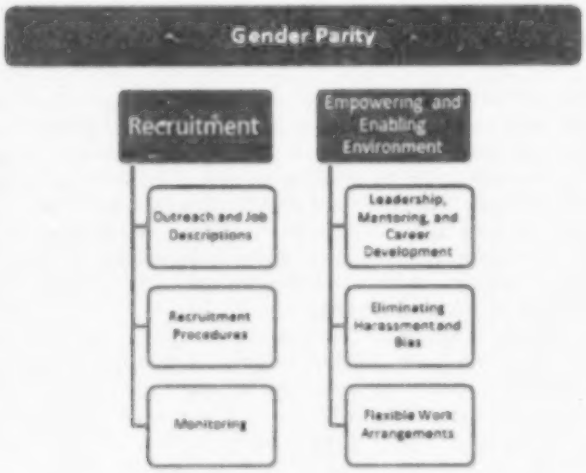
Current status of gender parity in UNIDO

7. Despite some progress, there is still a lower representation of women at every professional level in UNIDO. This is more pronounced at senior levels, as is evident in the chart below, showing the percentage of men and women members of staff at each professional rank as of 31 December 2017.



Action plan

8. The action plan outlined below targets areas with corresponding actions to (I) remove obstacles to the recruitment, retention, promotion and mobility of women members of staff, and (ii) create an enabling working environment, in line with the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity.



Target 1: Recruitment

9. The action areas listed under the "recruitment" target include increased outreach to women and removing bias from recruitment procedures. Measures under these action areas are intended to increase the number of qualified women applying for vacancies and maximize the number of qualified women recruited. Actions include, inter alia, requiring a minimum of 30 per cent of applications from the under-represented sex for further assessment; reviewing job profiles and vacancy announcements to address bias; developing targeted recruitment programmes; masking personal information from hiring managers; and ensuring gender balance in recruitment panels, and gender-responsive and competency-based interviewing skills training for interview panellists.

Target 2: Empowering and enabling environment

10. The action areas listed under "empowering and enabling environment" outline measures for improving the morale, productivity and sense of well-being of all UNIDO employees by promoting diversity, career development, flexible working arrangements and family-friendly policies. By creating an inclusive working culture and focusing on career development, the action plan aims to unlock resources, strengthen efforts and attract future employees, both women and men, so that the Organization can fully deliver on its programmatic commitments. Envisaged measures include, inter alia, integrating a gender perspective and prioritizing women members of staff in all relevant learning and managerial/leadership development programmes; expanding internal capacity-building and mentoring programmes; trainings on gender, diversity and unconscious bias for all staff; implementing and reviewing policies to prevent harassment and abuse of authority, as well as policies on ethics, on the administration of justice, on conflict resolution and on the protection against retaliation; and increasing the availability and use of flexible working arrangements to accommodate family care responsibilities, including for sick and ageing family members.

Accountability

11. Accountability for implementation will be ensured by the Director General cascading goals on gender parity to managing directors and directors through the staff performance appraisal exercise. The Department of Human Resources Management (HRM) will monitor data on staff selection at each level of recruitment, develop a dashboard to display real-time sex-disaggregated staffing data and the Director of HRM will report regularly on gender parity to the Director General. Such reports will also be made to the policymaking organs through the annual reports on UNIDO staffing and on gender equality.

III. Action required of the Board

12. The Board may wish to take note of the information provided in the present report.